

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 were pending in this application, claims 2-4 and 9-17 having been deemed to present allowable subject matter¹, and claims 1 and 5-7 having been rejected. The drawings were objected to.

Claims 1 and 5-7 have been cancelled. Claims 2-4 and 9-17 have been amended (in part, the reference numbers used in the claims have been deleted to clarify that the claims are not intended to be limited to the specification embodiments), and a set of replacement drawings is submitted herewith. Claims 2, 9, 12 and 15 are independent.

The Examiner is thanked for the indicated allowability of claims 2-4 and 9-17. Claims 2, 9, 12 and 15 have been placed into independent form, and so all pending claims are allowable.

The Objection to the Drawings

The drawings have been objected to on grounds that various numbered square blocks should be labeled. The Examiner invited Applicant to add text to each box to clarify what that box discloses.

In the interests of expediting prosecution, and without conceding the propriety of this objection, Applicant has prepared and submits herewith two replacement sheets of drawings containing revised Figs. 1-3. The blocks depicted therein have been revised to include the descriptive text that the Examiner requested (such text corresponds to the discussion of those drawings in the specification). No new matter has been added.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent appln. publn. no. 2002/0031553 to Koizumi.

¹ The Office Action Summary sheet identifies in part claims 9-17 as being objected to; the listing of allowable subject matter at page 5, section 6, of the Office Action only refers to claims 10-17. Since claim 9 was not specifically rejected, it is understood that the Office Action Summary sheet correctly identifies claim 9 as objected to.

The cancellation of claims 1 and 5-7 renders all portions of this rejection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is required.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that all outstanding objections and rejections have been addressed and are now either moot or are overcome. Applicant further submits that all claims pending in this application are patentable over the prior art. Accordingly, favorable consideration and prompt allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

No fees are believed to be due in connection with the filing of this paper. If, however, the Commissioner deems any additional fee(s) to be now or hereafter due in connection with this application, authority is given to charge all such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-4019.

In the event that there are any questions, or should additional information be required, please contact Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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